

APPLICATION NO.	P15/S0707/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	3.6.2015
PARISH	SANDFORD
WARD MEMBER(S)	Jon Woodley-Shead
APPLICANT	Mr and Mrs Fox
SITE	Bassimer, 37 Church Road, Sandford-on-Thames, OX4 4XZ
PROPOSAL	Erection of a three bedroom dwelling house, garage and associated landscape works adjacent to the applicants existing property.
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	453277/201673
OFFICER	Paul Bowers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is referred to planning committee because the views of the Sandford on Thames Parish Council differ from the officer's recommendation.
- 1.2 The site comprises Bassimer, a detached two storey brown brick and tiled roof dwelling. It is visible through the gap created for the vehicular access and is well screened along the remainder of the road frontage. The house itself is on a higher land level than the road. Levels change within the site with land sloping from the rear, the front of the site and from east to west.
- 1.3 The site includes a large side and front garden. It is not located in a conservation area but is located within the Oxford Green Belt.
- 1.4 A location plan identifying the site can be found at **Appendix 1.**

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks full planning permission to erect a two storey, detached, three bedroom dwelling to the front and side of the existing house. The dwelling will be served by the existing access for Bassimer and will include a flat roof attached single garage to the side.
- 2.2 Reduced copies of the plans accompanying the application can be found at **Appendix 2** to this report. All the plans and representations can be viewed on the council's website www.southoxon.gov.uk under the planning application reference number.

3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 **Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council** – Recommend refusal for the following reasons;
- Over development.
 - Change to the rural character of the area.
 - Concern about speeds of traffic and parking on the road.
- 3.2 **Neighbour Responses** – No responses received.
- 3.3 **OCC Archaeological Services** - No objection subject to conditions relating to investigation.

3.4 **OCC Countryside Access** - No objection.

3.5 **OCC Highways** - No objection subject to conditions.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P11/W1185](#) - Approved (13/10/2011)

1) First floor extension to form en-suite bathroom.

2) Replace existing flat roof on cloak-room with new intersecting tiled, pitched roof.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027** policies

CSEN2 - Green Belt protection

CSQ3 - Design

CSR1 - Housing in villages

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 policies;

C9 - Loss of landscape features

CON11 – Archaeology and historic building analysis and recording

CON13 - Archaeology and historic building analysis and recording

D1 - Principles of good design

D2 - Safe and secure parking for vehicles and cycles

D3 - Outdoor amenity area

D4 - Reasonable level of privacy for occupiers

G2 - Protect district from adverse development

GB4 - Openness of Green Belt maintained

H4 - Housing sites in towns and larger villages outside Green Belt

T1 - Safe, convenient and adequate highway network for all users

T2 - Unloading, turning and parking for all highway users

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The issues to consider in relation to this proposal are;

- **Whether the site constitutes an infill plot.**
- **Impact on the Green Belt.**
- **Whether the proposal accords with the criteria of Policy H4.**
- **Impact on an archeologically sensitive area.**
- **Impact on trees.**
- **Other issues.**

Whether the site constitutes an infill plot.

6.2 Policy CSR1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 (SOCS) permits infill development within the settlement of 'Smaller Villages' such as Sandford on Thames.

6.3 Infill development is defined in the Appendix 1 of SOCS as; *'The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings'*.

- 6.4 Although the application site forms part of the garden of an existing dwelling it is an open space and visual gap in a continuous line of development. This meets the definition of infill and in my view, the principle of a dwelling in this location is acceptable.

Impact on the Green Belt.

- 6.5 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. This is set out in Section 9 of the NPPF.

The five purposes of the green belt are;

- to check the unrestricted urban sprawl of large built up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In addition there is a presumption against inappropriate development. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt.

- 6.6 The NPPF advises that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt except for the following purposes;

- Agriculture and forestry.
- Appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries and other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and don't conflict with the purposes of including land in it.
- The extension alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- The replacement of a building where it is in the same use as the existing and is not materially larger.
- Limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan or;
- **Limited infilling** or partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land) whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

- 6.7 The first step in assessing the impact on the Green Belt is to consider whether the proposal constitutes inappropriate development or not. If it is established that the development is not inappropriate then the second step is to consider whether the development harms the openness of Green Belt.

- 6.8 The NPPF says that where villages are included within the Green Belt, it has to be because they too contribute to its openness.

- 6.9 The site is considered an infill plot as it is a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage in a village where infill is acceptable. CSR1 considers that if it is an infill site, then it will be part of a built up area/ frontage and there would be harm to the openness but that it would be limited. However in some cases the site may be an important open space within the village and filling the gap would cause serious harm which would not be acceptable.

- 6.10 The acceptability of this scheme revolves around the impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the impact on the character of the area, these are the balanced views that Policy CSEN2 and Policy GB4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 are seeking to achieve.
- 6.11 As highlighted above, the last bullet point (paragraph 6.4) states that limited infilling is on the list of development that is not considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt. The proposal amounts to filling a gap on an otherwise built up frontage with a single dwelling and constitutes infill development. In your officers view erecting a dwelling in this location is not an inappropriate form of development.
- 6.12 Erecting a dwelling on an open piece of land will always have an impact on openness. However the fact that the NPPF does not consider infill development as inappropriate form of development means that there is an acceptance that some limited impact as a result of having new buildings is acceptable.
- 6.13 In terms of the impact to openness regard must be had to the position of the dwelling in respect of the existing built form. The proposed building sits between the two adjacent buildings. The sloping nature of the site allows for the development to take advantage of this which means that the height of the building is comparable to the existing dwelling at Bassimer. The bulk and mass of the new house is not disproportionate to nearby buildings. Taken overall the impact to the wider openness of the Green Belt is not significant. The development therefore accords with Policies CSEN 2 and GB4.

Whether the proposal accords with the criteria of Policy H4.

- 6.14 If a proposed housing development is acceptable in principle and accords with Policy CSR1 of SOCS then the detail of the proposal must then be assessed against the criteria of Policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP).
- 6.15 Provision (i) of Policy H4 states *'an important open space of public, environmental or ecological value is not lost, nor an important view spoilt.'*
- 6.16 The site is part of an existing garden. It does not comprise an important open space of either public or environmental value. There are not wider views of the open countryside to the rear which will be lost as a result of this development.
- 6.17 Provision (ii) states *'the design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings.'* whilst Provision (iii) states that the *'character of the area is not adversely affected.'*
- 6.18 The area is characterised by dwellings of varying types, age, design and materials. There is no one uniform appearance that the new dwelling will be considered in direct comparison. In that respect the proposed dwelling will add to the mixed and diverse character rather than detract from it.
- 6.19 The dwelling will be sited forward of the existing building rather than in line with it. Had it been in line it would have potentially created issues with the existing building due to number and size of the window openings. Setting it forward does put the building somewhat at odds with the building it will sit immediately adjacent. It is however very well screened and not so far forward in the plot that it would appear prominent or intrusive in the street scene. In addition Junbri to the east of the site is on a similar building line to that proposed.

- 6.20 *Provision iv) of Policy H4 states that there should be no overriding amenity or environmental or highway objections.*
- 6.21 In terms of amenity this refers to both the amenity of the new property but also the amenity and the impact on surrounding properties.
- 6.22 There are four properties that could potentially be affected by the development: Bassimer would be the most affected and to a lesser extent Kiln House, Cabora Bassa to the south and 39 Church Road to the west.
- 6.23 In terms of overlooking there are no first floor windows in the rear of the building. The windows in the west facing side elevation look toward 39 Church Road. The existing screening on the boundary will act as a barrier. However if this were to be removed at any point it would not be considered harmful due to any views being of the front public facing area of the property.
- 6.24 The dwelling would be to the north of Kiln House and Cabora Bassa such that they will not be overshadowed or have reduced sun light. The distance between the properties also ensures that the new dwelling will not be oppressive or overbearing.
- 6.25 The change in levels on the site has meant that the dwelling has been design in such a way that where it adjoins Bassimer it will appear single storey. The impact of the bulk and height of the building is mitigated to the extent that it would not be unduly overbearing or harmful to the amenities of the occupants of the existing property.
- 6.26 *Provision v) relates to back land development and seeks ensure that it would not create problems of privacy and access and would not extend the built up limits of the settlement.*
- 6.27 The dwelling sits between two existing buildings within the village. It does not result in extending the village in to the countryside.
- 6.28 Overall the development complies with the criteria of Policy H4.

Impact on an archeologically sensitive area.

- 6.29 The site is located in an area of archaeological potential to the south west of the site of a deserted medieval village identified as a series of low earthworks around a trackway. The settlement is dated to the C13th and C14th. The full extent of the medieval settlement is unknown. This development is located along the line of this trackway and it is therefore possible that further medieval settlement extended along its route. This development could therefore encounter medieval features related to this deserted settlement.
- 6.30 The Oxfordshire County Council's archaeologist has recommended two conditions on any forthcoming planning permission that ensures that archaeological monitoring and recording action be maintained during the period of construction. These conditions are therefore proposed as part of this recommendation.
- 6.31 **Impact on trees.**

Policy C9 seeks to protect landscape features which would include trees given that they make an important contribution to the local scene. It also states that where such features are to be retained they should be protected during the course of development

and ensure their survival following completion.

- 6.32 None of the trees on the site are the subject of a tree preservation order or protected by virtue of being within a conservation area. However the application has been supported by a tree report which concludes that the new dwelling would be will be outside of the root protection area of all the retained trees with the exception of a Cherry Tree. The overall impact is not considered harmful and as part of this recommendation a tree protection condition is proposed to ensure that the works of construction do not adversely impact the trees showed to be retained.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 I recommend that planning permission is granted because Sandford on Thames is a settlement where infill development is permitted in principle. Infill development is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The new house would sit within an existing gap between buildings on a continuous built line of development.

The proposal meets the definition of infill development and given its height, bulk, massing and siting will not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt.

The design and materials reflects local vernacular and building materials and does not detract from the wider character of the area.

The site affords for sufficient amenity space and parking and does not result in a materially harmful unneighbourly impact to either adjoining property.

Conditions are proposed relating to highway matters and archeology. The development accords with the relevant development plan policies.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **That planning Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement three years - full planning permission.**
2. **Approved plans.**
3. **Sample materials required (walls and roof).**
4. **Existing vehicular access.**
5. **Turning area and car parking.**
6. **No surface water drainage to highway.**
7. **No garage conversion into accommodation.**
8. **Archaeological watching brief.**
9. **Archaeology.**
10. **Tree protection (general).**

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